

Administration of Barack Obama, 2016

Remarks Honoring the 2016 Super Bowl Champion Denver Broncos

June 6, 2016

The President. Hello, everybody. Good afternoon. Have a seat, have a seat. Welcome to the White House.

Now, I have to tell you that these guys were out here practicing a little earlier. *[Laughter]* So before we get started, I just need to make sure that we're all set, that they were paying attention. So let me just say: Omaha! Omaha! 44 is Mike! Bags Montana! *[Laughter]* I don't know, it doesn't seem to work as well for me. *[Laughter]*

Let's give it up for the Super Bowl Champion Denver Broncos! *[Applause]* Yes! We have some big Broncos fans in the house, including Mayor Hancock from the great city of Denver, outstanding Members of Congress, the delegation. I want to recognize Broncos CEO Joe Ellis, a couple of your former quarterbacks: GM John Elway, Coach Gary Kubiak.

And let's give a big round of applause to Mrs. Annabel Bowlen. As many of you know, Annabel is here on behalf of the Bowlen family and her husband Pat, the longtime Broncos owner who's inspiring all of us with his courageous fight against Alzheimer's. And it's only fitting that when they won the Super Bowl in February, John declared from the podium: "This one is for Pat!" And I was just—we were backstage talking, the record that Pat was able to put together, going to more Super Bowls than losing seasons, that's pretty remarkable. You're not going to see that duplicated many places; that's a testimony to what an extraordinary owner he has been and continues to be.

Pat and Annabel have led this organization for 32 successful years; that rivals just about any other franchise in football. In that time, the Broncos have, as I said earlier, gone time and time again to the Super Bowl, and last year was a high-water mark, with a third Super Bowl trophy and a dominating win over Carolina.

That doesn't mean it was always pretty—or ever pretty. *[Laughter]* Coach has acknowledged this is a gritty, hard-nosed group of grinders. Last season, the Broncos won an NFL-record 11 games by a touchdown or less. And you don't do that without one of the greatest defenses of all time. Now, I'm a Bears fan—1985 was pretty good. Elway remembers. *[Laughter]* But I've got to admit, this one was pretty good too. *[Laughter]*

It all starts with Super Bowl MVP Von Miller, who terrorized opponents from the edge all season long. In the Super Bowl and the AFC Championship game, he had five sacks, two forced fumbles, an interception. Not bad for a guy who prides himself on his collection of eyeglasses—*[laughter]*—and claims to have been a geek all his life. We also saw him on "Dancing With the Stars." I think he's wearing his dance shoes today. Where were they? They were shiny and impressive. *[Laughter]*

Von was not alone. There was his partner on the opposite side, DeMarcus Ware. You had an extraordinary defensive line, a lockdown secondary. All in all, coordinator Wade Phillips's defense led the league in 19 statistical categories, including total defense, passing defense, and sacks. And down the stretch, they smothered three of the top four offenses in football.

And then, there was an offense that always seemed to come up big when it needed to. There's running backs C.J. Anderson and Ronnie Hillman. Receivers Emmanuel Sanders and

Demaryius Thomas. And we can't forget to mention the heart and soul of this team's offensive firepower, kicker Brandon McManus! *[Laughter]*

And then, there's this guy from the commercials. *[Laughter]* It doesn't matter whether you need insurance—*[laughter]*—pizza—*[laughter]*—a Buick—*[laughter]*—I mean, you basically can stock your whole household with stuff this guy is selling. *[Laughter]* You know where to turn: It's Peyton Manning! Where'd Peyton go? He's around here somewhere. There he is.

I have to say, I'm so pleased to be able to host Peyton here at the White House before I left. Anybody who has been a football fan has watched what is one of the greatest Hall of Fame careers ever, racking up more wins, more MVPs, more passing yards, more touchdown passes than anybody in history. The only quarterback to lead two different teams to Super Bowl wins. We were all obviously a little disappointed to see him hang it up this spring. But as somebody who is just a little bit older than he is, I was sympathetic—*[laughter]*—to the idea that running around with these guys, it takes its toll. But it is great to see somebody with a career like that, who always conducted himself on the field and off the field the way he did, to be able to go out on top. So please give a big round of applause for Peyton Manning.

Thank you. Yes, Peyton and I were talking back—and he said, yes, you should try it, don't overstay your welcome. *[Laughter]* Yes. But I've got term limits, so I had no choice—I can't. *[Laughter]*

Of course, this team is far more than a collection of players. The Broncos are a way of life, not just in Colorado, but throughout the Mountain West. They call it Broncos Country. Sold out just about every game in Denver since 1970. I've heard how loud that stadium can get—back in 2008, I gave my convention speech at Mile High. Thank you for letting me borrow it just for a little bit. I have a feeling it's a little louder after Von sacks Tom Brady. *[Laughter]* But it was pretty loud on that day.

And for all the love the fans give to this team, the Broncos gave it right back. In just the last year, players have served the community more than 360 times, from holding fitness clinics to mentoring young people to honoring our troops. All told, the Broncos have distributed more than \$25 million to local charities since 1993.

And earlier today Peyton and the guys spent some time with our wounded warriors. And nothing is—there's nothing I appreciate more than when outstanding athletes like this take the time to meet with our wounded warriors and are reminded of the fact that as much fun as this is, as great as football is as a part of our lives, it only happens because of the extraordinary sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. So we're very grateful to them for that.

So on and off the field, these guys are champs. Apparently, John Elway knows what he's doing. *[Laughter]* Coach knows what he's doing, the ownership knows what they're doing, and the players know what they're doing. And I assume that they're looking for another run.

I will continue to root for the Bears—*[laughter]*—but I've got to give this organization credit for having done an extraordinary job. And this is a well-deserved celebration of an extraordinary season.

So please give, one more time, Super Bowl Champion Denver Broncos a big round of applause! Good job.

Head Coach Gary Kubiak. Thank you, Mr. President. As you said before, unfortunately, the great leader of this organization, this team, is not here today. But on behalf of Mr. Bowlen,

our entire organization, thank you so much for you and your staff allowing us to be here today and share this special moment.

I am so proud of our fans, our organization, our coaches, but most importantly, these players. They gave it up for each other, and they went and achieved something special: They brought home a third world championship to the city of Denver. And I'm so proud to be a part of that, but this makes it even more so special. So thank you, and without further ado, Annabel is going to come up, and the captains, and present some——

The President. All right, what have we got, Annabel?

[At this point, the President was presented with a team jersey.]

The President. Oh, look at that!

Annabel Bowlen, wife of Owner Pat Bowlen. This is for you.

The President. That is a good-looking jersey right there. Number 44. I think Mr. Sanders said I might still be able to be a wide receiver? *[Laughter]* I said, it's been a while since I ran 4.4 40. *[Laughter]* But that is wonderful. Thank you so much. I appreciate it and thank you so much. I need a helmet. *[Laughter]* You get knocked around here in Washington quite a bit. *[Laughter]* So thank you. These are beautiful. Why don't we strike this podium and we can get a good picture? Come on, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:24 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Von Miller and DeMarcus Ware, outside linebackers, National Football League's Denver Broncos; and Tom Brady, quarterback, NFL's New England Patriots.

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